

The off-putting "nastiness" of the 2004 campaign has been fed by overly concentrated control of media in the United States. Through this system, demagogues can reach large audiences and sway political outcomes in irrational directions. This could feed a dangerous tendency toward authoritarianism in our political structure.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve

more than a returned
postcard. Thank you.